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ABSTRACT

In early 1972 the district embarked on a reorganization project to solve organizational problems that had lingered over the previous several years. Its objectives were to improve an already high quality educational program, increase the operational efficiency of the district, and provide for demonstrably greater economy. The results presented cover the district's findings concerning six specific reorganizational criteria: financial and staffing factors, educational criteria, social criteria, student attendance, transportation, and comparative class size. Also included are parent reactions to the reorganization. Four "indicators of quality" are used as the educational criteria: individualization, interpersonal regard, creative expression, and group activity. (Author/IRT)

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SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SPRINGFIELD, NEW JERSEY

EVALUATION OF ELEMENTARY LEVEL REORGANIZATION

FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR 1972-73

Financial and Staffing Factors
Educational Criteria
Social Criteria
Student Attendance Data
Class Size
Transportation
Comments

Dr. Fred Baruchin
Superintendent of Schools
November, 1973

(The district is indebted once again to Ms. Grace Kingsbury, this time for developing and conducting the Educational Criteria Companent of this survey.)

EA 008 092

INTRODUCTION

In early 1972, this district embarked upon a reorganizational project to solve organizational problems which had lingered over the previous several years. Its objectives were to improve an already high quality educational program, increase the operational efficiency of the district, and provide for a demonstrably more economical result at the same time. In the following pages, we present our findings concerning six specific reorganizational criteria. These indicate that we have indeed achieved the objectives sought. Also, however, we present the comments made by parents, teachers, and students, some of which indicate that there is still more to be done.

It is testimony to the Springfield Community that in a time of transition and resultant adversity there was unity of purpose. Parents who had questioned the change gave it a fair and supportive test. Students indicated once again their fine, flexible and resilient qualities. Moreover, though the change was sudden, in spite of the long number of years in which it was considered, administrators, teachers and supportive staff made it work! Such professionalism is the "stuff" on which our future is sewn!

FINANCIAL AND STAFFING FACTORS

A). ENROLLMENTS

Oct.	1969	-	1844	
Oct.	1970	-	1820	-24
Oct.	1971	-	1738	-82
Oct.	1972	-	1639	-99
Oct.	1973	-	1531	-108

From October, 1970 to October, 1972 the district's enrollment decreased by 205 students. At the same time, the current expense appropriations rose by $431,479.00. From October, 1972 to October, 1973, enrollment decreased by 108 students. However, in that year of reorganization current expense appropriations decreased by $75,943.00.

Recently, the New Jersey State Department of Education issued a release showing that in the light of decreasing enrollments in the State, expenses were increasing by twelve per cent. Largely as a result of the reorganization, Springfield does not follow that trend.

TABLE 1

COMPARATIVE STAFFING 1971-72 - 1972-73

Category	1971-72	1972-73	Chg.
Superintendent	1	1	
Assistant Superintendent	1	1	
Board Secretary	1	1	
Superintendent Buildings & Grounds	1	1	
Ass't. Supt. Buildings & Grounds	1	1	
Principals	5	4+Sabbatical	
Assistant Principals	1	1	
Classroom Teachers	79.0	73	-6
Librarians	5.0	5.0	
Learning Lab. Teachers	5.0	4.0	-1
Learning Disability Teachers	4.0	3.0	-1
Supplemental Teachers; Title I	1.5	1.0	-.5
Reserve and Adjunct Teachers	2.0	2.0	
Coordinator Special Services	1.0	1.0	
Psychologist	1.0	1.0	
Art	2.0	2.0	
Art/Humanities	1.0	1.5	+.5
Cafeteria Mgr.	1.0	1.0	
Home Economics	2.0	2.0	
Foreign Languages	4.5	4.0	-.5
Industrial Arts	2.0	2.0	
Physical Education	8.0	7.0	-1
Vocal Music	2.0	2.0	
Vocal Music/Humanities	1.0	1.0	
Instrumental Music	2.6	2.6	
Guidance	2.0	2.0	
Science/Math Specialist	.6	.6	
Learning Dis. Teacher Consultant	2.0	2.0	
Social Worker	1.0	1.0	
IPI Teacher	2.0	1.3	-.7
Speech	1.5	1.5	
Nurses	2.5	2.5	
Physician	1 plus	1 plus	
Dentist	1.0	1.0	

Total 1971-72 - 136.2 + 9.0 (admin.)
Total 1972-73 - 126.0 + 9.0 (admin.)
Prof. Pers. Per Thousand Students
1971-72 84
1972-73 78

Staff decreases were made on the basis of attrition, that is, most positions which were vacated by retirement or resignation were not refilled. This table pertains only to professionally certified personnel.

TABLE 2

CURRENT EXPENSE

	Budget Appropriation	Expended	Unexpended
1969-70	$2,283,566.00	$2,202,085.61	$81,480.39
1970-71 (Increase)	2,484,350.00 (200,784.00)	2,428,420.40	55,929.60
1971-72 (Increase)	2,767,874.30 (283,524.30)	2,641,806.91	126,067.39
1972-73 (Increase)	2,915,829.00 (147,954.70)	2,656,687.89	259,141.11
1973-74 (Decrease)	2,839,886.00 -75,943.00		

A). CHANGES IN CURRENT EXPENSE EXPENDITURES:

1969-70	-	$2,202,085.61
1968-69	-	1,906,862.88
		$ 295,222.73
1970-71	-	$2,428,420.40
1969-70	-	2,202,085.61
		$ 226,334.79
1971-72	-	$2,641,806.91
1970-71	-	2,428,420.40
		$ 213,386.51
1972-73	-	$2,656,687.89
1971-72	-	2,641,806.91
		$ 14,880.98

TABLE 3

CURRENT EXPENSE - TEACHER SALARIES

	Budget Appropriation	Expended	Unexpended
1969-70	$1,314,291.00	$1,254,536.20	$59,754.80
1970-71	1,384,000.00	1,359,585.30	24,414.70
1971-72	1,522,135.00	1,452,409.94	69,725.06
1972-73	1,558,615.00	1,423,741.11	134,873.89
1973-74	1,502,415.00		

A). CHANGES IN EXPENDITURES - (CURRENT EXPENSE TEACHER SALARIES)

1970-71	-	$1,359,585.30
1969-70	-	1,254.536.20
	+ $	105,049.10
1971-72	-	$1,452,409.94
1970-71	-	1,359,585.30
	+ $	92,824.64
* 1971-72	-	$1,452,409.94
1972-73	-	1,423,741.11
	- $	28,668.83

* Note -- less money was spent on teacher salaries in 1972-73 than in previous year, in spite of the raises given to teachers that year.

TABLE 4

CURRENT EXPENSE (SECRETARIAL SALARIES - PRINCIPALS' OFFICES)

	Budget Appropriation	Expended	Unexpended
1969-70	$33,600.00	$31,930.07	$1669.93
1970-71	37,300.00	35,200.00	2100.00
1971-72	40,800.00	38,825.00	1975.00
1972-73	42,110.00	32,176.77	9933.23

In 1972-73, the expenditure in this category was far less than it was in each of the two prior years, and only $246.70 more than it was in 1969-70.

TABLE 5

CURRENT EXPENSE (OPERATION OF PLANT - SALARIES)

	Budget Appropriation	Expended	Unexpended
1969-70	$113,100.00	$104,672.07	$ 8,427.93
1970-71 (Increase)	124,400.00 (11,300)	107,676.10	16,723.90
1971-72 (Increase)	136,800.00 (12,400)	119,889.52	16,910.48
1972-73 (Decrease)	136,695.00 (-105.)	119,487.95	17,207.05

Despite salary raises, the 1972-73 expenditure in this category was less than the 1971-72 expenditure for the same. Moreover, the unexpended balance for 1972-73 exceeded that for 1971-72, even though the appropriation was smaller than the appropriation the year before.

EDUCATIONAL CRITERIA

Background Information

In an attempt to evaluate the cluster reorganization arrangement, the following projects were undertaken:

1. Telephone calls to a sampling of parents residing in the district and served by the Walton and Sandmeier Schools. These calls were made to parents who had written to the superintendent and/or the Board of Education at the time the reorganization was being considered, expressing their generally strong feelings prior to the reorganization. Most of those original expressions had been negative ones.

2. A survey form was designed and sent to parents and teachers, and copies were given to most children involved in the reorganization in the three schools. Teacher responses have not yet been tabulated.

The survey items were designed to assess attitudes concerning the reorganization and were based upon and drawn from three areas.

...the stated potential advantages and possible disadvantages included in the superintendent's "Conceptualized Model"

...recommendations of the E. V. Walton PTA, made in a meeting with the Board of Education in March, 1972

...the educational goals derived jointly with community representatives for the Springfield schools.

The questions were divided into categories based on "Indicators of Quality" as defined in the Metropolitan School Study Council's 1973 publication out of Columbia University. The four categories found in that study to be "Indicators of Quality" and therefore assessed were:

I. Individualization
II. Interpersonal Regard
III. Creative Expression
IV. Group Activity

The "Likert" method of measuring attitudes utilizes a scale of 5 ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree," with a numerical weight given to each response. The subject's score is the sum of the weights of the responses he circles. A high score indicates a highly favorable attitude and a low score the opposite. The range of scores for the nineteen items would be 19 for "strongly disagree" to 95 for "strongly agree."

Results of the Telephone Survey

The eleven telephone conversations revealed little change in basic attitudes. People who had favored the reorganization were pleased with it, and those who did not favor it were still experiencing negative feelings. Some apparently did not have sufficient information about gains arising out of the plan, for instance, financial gains.

Two people expressed feelings that the reorganization was a result of a handful of people who are too vocal and "continue to meddle in school." Two others felt that Sandmeier School was now too formal or lacking in spirit. Three people indicated they would have preferred a redistricting with a K - 5 arrangement for both Walton and Sandmeier. One person did not like the Board's handling of the plan and one person expressed concern with transportation. Another felt her original fears were not realized.

Parent and Student Surveys

The following table and graphs represent summaries of the parent and children's survey forms. The table lists the average score per group, with a breakdown into the four "Indicators of Quality" categories cited earlier -- Individualization, Interpersonal Regard, Creative Expression, Group Activity.

TABLE 6

INDICATORS OF QUALITY

Respondents	Individualization		Interpersonal Regard		Creative Expression		Group Activity	
	Avg. Score	Poss. Score	Avg. Score	Poss. Score	Avg. Score	Poss. Score	Avg. Score	Poss. Score
Parents	18	25	26	35	14	20	12	15
6th Graders	16	25	25	35	12	20	12	15
5th Graders	20	25	26	35	14	20	12	15

For the total category, "Indicators of Quality," the average scores were as follows:

	Total Average	Total Possible
Parents	69	95
6th Graders	63	95
5th Graders	72	95

There is a greater similarity between parents and fifth graders' reactions. The scores tend to be very positive, indicating a most favorable attitude toward the items.

The four categories of educational procedure exemplifying school quality are defined as follows: [1]

Individualization -- procedures that reflect an attempt to deal with individual differences among pupils according to rate of growth, capacities, background, goals, requirements, and the like.

Interpersonal Regard -- behavior that reflects warmth and respect among pupils and between pupils and teachers.

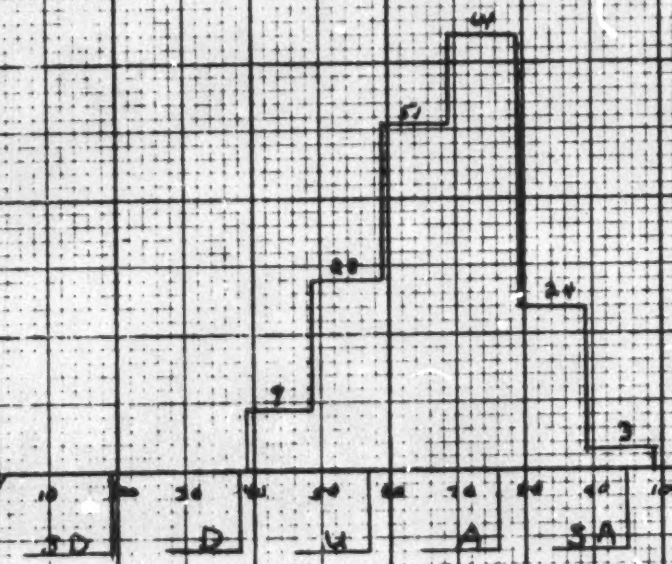
Creative Expression and Divergency of Thinking -- opportunity for expression of intelligence in many different ways, for the realization of varieties of talent, and the encouragement of intellectual pioneering.

Group Activity -- group interaction and interpersonal facilitation as instruments to aid learning and the accomplishment of social goals.

1. Vincent, William S.; "Indicators of Quality," Research Bulletin, Institute of Administrative Research, Teachers College Columbia University; Volume 7, Number 3; May, 1967; p. 2

Summary of Parent Responses

179 Parents completed survey Form



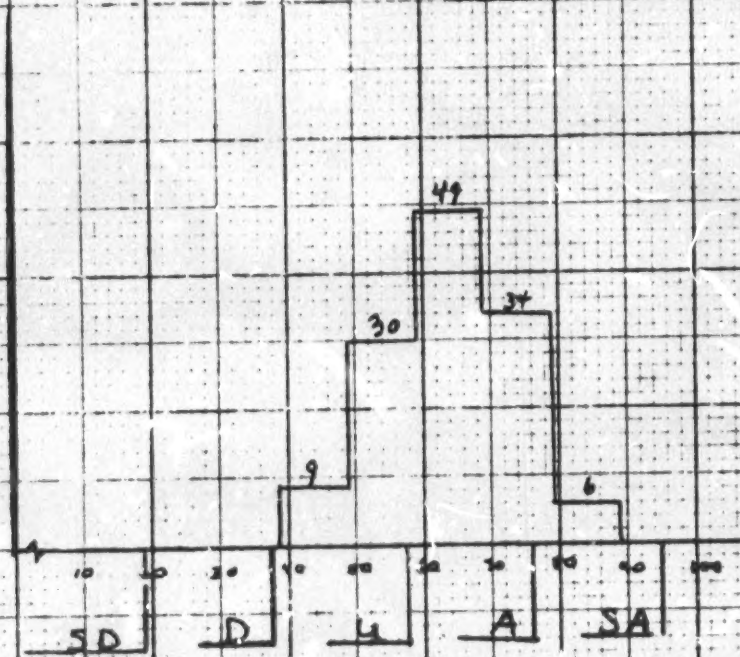
Range of Scores : 44 - 92

Possible Scores :

Strongly Disagree with each item	19
Disagree with each item	38
Undecided about each item	57
Agree with each item	76
Strongly Agree with each item	95

Summary of Sixth Grade Responses

128 Responses



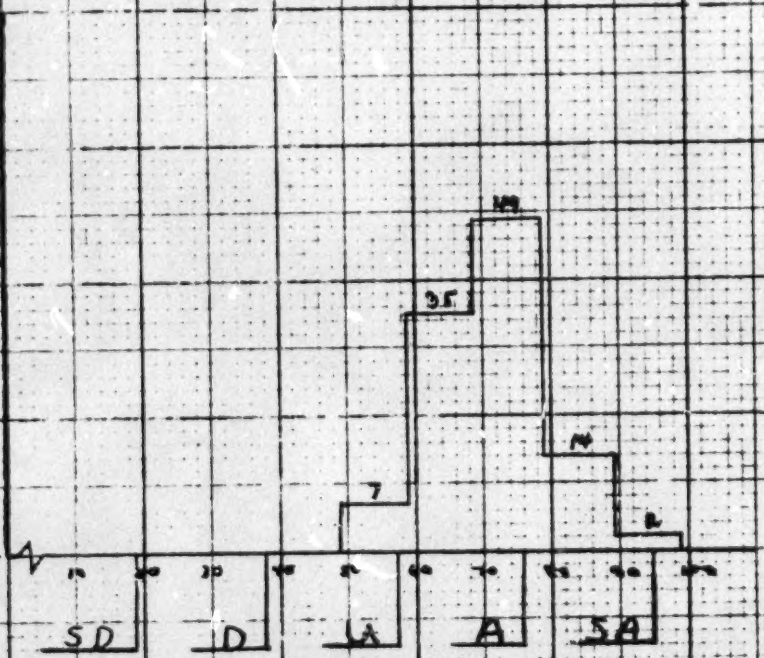
Range of Scores: 42 - 82

Possible Scores:

Strongly disagree with each item	19
Disagree with each item	38
Undecided about each item	57
Agree with each item	76
Strongly agree with each item	95

Summary of Fifth Grade Responses

104 Responses



Range of scores: 50 - 95

Possible Scores:

Strongly disagree with each item	19
Disagree with each item	38
Undecided about each item	57
Agree with each item	76
Strongly agree with each item	95

SOCIAL CRITERIA

Writing in The Shortchanged Children of Suburbia, Professor Alice Miel of Columbia University has said the following:[2]

> "Lacking first-hand contact, how do suburban children learn about human difference, and what do they think about it? How can they acquire respect for persons whom their middle-class society brands less acceptable than themselves? And what can adults, parents, school administrators, classroom teachers, community organizations - do to groom the coming suburban generation for a proper role in a multicultural society?
>
> "But in one aspect of their education suburban children are underprivileged. Though other races, other nationalities, other generations have a great deal to teach them, there is little in their education, formal or otherwise, to familiarize them with the rich diversity of American life."

The reorganization of part of the elementary level of the district has brought about a much more suitably integrated student body in these schools. Subjective criteria, comments by students and parents, ease of adjustment to sixth grade during 1973-74 all attest to that fact. The "Interpersonal Regard" component of the parent and student surveys further confirms that finding.

Also, item 20 of the survey pertains to a fuller integration of children representative of the total community, as one result of the reorganization. This was measured on the parents' forms, but not on the students'. The tabulations are straight counts of responses; not scores or averages of scores.

One hundred and seventeen of the one hundred and seventy-nine respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the reorganization did in fact result in a fuller integration of children representative of the entire community.

[2] Miel, Alice; The Shortchanged Children of Suburbia; Institute of Human Relations Press, 165 East 56 Street, New York, New York 10022

TABLE 7

STUDENT ATTENDANCE DATA

		Percent of Attendance
1970-71	Chisholm	94.9
	Sandmeier	94.7
	Walton	94.8
1971-72	Chisholm	95.2
	Sandmeier	93.8
	Walton	95.1
1972-73	Sandmeier	95.4
	Walton	94.3

The reorganization had no appreciable impact upon student attendance. Falling percentages of attendance can reflect upon student morale. No such factor was evident in the reorganization.

TABLE 8

AVERAGE TEMPERATURE AND AVERAGE MONTHLY SNOWFALLS 1968 - 1973

	Average Temperatures Sept. - June	Average Monthly Snowfall Dec. - March
1968-69	48.4	8.51"
1969-70	46.7	6.63"
1970-71	43.0	5.04"
1971-72	48.7	4.70"
1972-73	48.5	0.80"

There was no significant difference in average temperatures from 1968-69 to 1972-73. There has been, however, a steady decrease in average monthly snowfall. It is doubtful whether the latter alone had a major impact on school attendance and related declines in expenditures. Also from 1968-69 on, though the average snowfalls declined, budgets continued to escalate. Had there been a cause and effect relationship, the effect should have been felt earlier than in the 1972-73 school year. The weather, therefore, is discounted as a major contributor to economies and attendance factors related to the reorganization in this report.

TRANSPORTATION FACTOR

Another item not included on the students' forms pertained to the transportation factor. Item 21 elicited responses concerning the ability of parents to get to and from school with a minimum of inconvenience.

116 parents found transportation no problem,
14 were undecided, and 49 of the 179 respondents found it still a problem.

TABLE 9

COMPARATIVE CLASS SIZES

	Grade 1		Grade 2		Grade 3		Grade 4		Grade 5		Kdg.	
	R	A	R	A	R	A	R	A	R	A	R	A
9/1973	15-16	15.6	19-20	19.8	18-21	19.4	22-24	23.2	22-23	22.4	13-18	15.5
9/1972	19-20	19.8	18-20	19.2	22-24	22.8	23-24	23.2	22-24	23.2		
9/1971	15-20	17.8	13-21	18.7	17-22	19.4	15-23	19.8	16-28	20		
9/1970	Mixed	grade	levels		14-23	19	17-27	20	14-23	18.6	14-21	18.9

R = Range - the lowest class size to the highest at the particular grade level

A = Average size of classes at the particular grade level

The reorganization balanced class sizes better than they had been balanced previously. Moreover, class size in every grade involved was highly acceptable and in accordance with varied professional recommendations.

COMMENTS

Space was provided for people to volunteer their personal responses and these responses are listed below. Some responses did not pertain to the reorganization, but are included for your information.

Parents:

1. Lunch room would enhance program 2
2. Lack of space for special subjects 2
3. Transportation problems getting to and from school as well as because of new friendships out of neighborhood 35
4. In favor of individualization 5
5. More innovative techniques seen as advantage 3
6. Have interpersonal regard - more socialization 33
7. Safer because of separation of grades 2
8. Problem with music 1
9. Favors reporting system 2
10. Smaller classes now 5
11. Problems with parking lots 2
12. Would rather preserve neighborhood school 4
13. Possible saving of money 3
14. Necessity of staying for lunch a problem 3
15. Need to emphasize basic skills with need for more homework 23
16. Volunteer aides should be utilized 1
17. It is a good long range plan 1
18. Why not keep children according to class groups as they move along 1
19. Brings unity to Springfield 1
20. Caldwell should be included 5
21. Things stayed the same
22. There should be more interaction between parents and teachers
23. There will be problem with school identification 3
24. Should be more interaction between K - 5 children 6

25. No interaction among 5th grade teachers 1
26. Likes path between schools 1
27. Path inadequately supervised 2
28. Children became more independent and self reliant 2
29. Please don't innovate too quickly 1
30. Special Services not sufficient 1
31. Class size increased and that isn't good 6
32. Give more attention to the gifted child 2
33. Only solution due to decreasing population 1
34. Too soon to evaluate
35. Classes need more structure 5
36. Enclose play area with bubble 1

6th Grade:

1. Liked IPI 4
2. We had more gym 8
3. We had better field trips 3
4. Better social interaction 20
5. No little kids to bother you 1
6. Music was a problem 10
7. Transportation problem 1
8. Library problem 2
9. Reading was a problem 2
10. Art was a problem 1
11. No interaction among 5th grade teacher teams 5
12. Wanted to be with younger children 1
13. Marking system a problem 1

14. Problem with gym teacher 1
15. Water fountains didn't work (outside) 3
16. Lunch was good 1

5th Grade:

1. Liked 4th and 5th grades together 3
2. Liked having student teachers 1
3. More chance to make friends 21
4. Iroquois Day was good 2
5. Liked not being crowded 1
6. Liked changing classes 1
7. Liked the woods 1
8. Liked eating outside 1
9. The scenery is better 1
10. The playground is better 2
11. There is more room
12. Other school was closer 2
13. Miss other school but like this one 2
14. Too many principals 1
15. School should be air conditioned 2
16. Too many kids in a class 1
17. Problems with IPI 4
18. Like IPI and Science 1
19. There is not enough help 1
20. Do not like report cards 1

Teacher Comments:

1. Many items on survey were applicable before reorganization - no great changes resulted 1
2. Greater number of teachers per grade level created a brain trust of ideas 2
3. Greater opportunity for team teaching 1
4. Faculties should be shifted every few years.
5. Opened lines of communications 2
6. Prefer neighborhood school concept 2
7. Some children must walk too far 3
8. Larger classes resulted 1
9. The change was stimulating 1
10. Improved socialization for children 2
11. Teacher morale suffered 2
12. Plan did not fulfill potential 1
13. Did not like survey form 1
14. Children should be surveyed for opinions 1
15. More materials (including paper) needed 2
16. Lack of A. V. equipment
17. Provided for greater integration 3
18. Created necessity for an enforced lunch program 1
19. Lunch program does not encourage high nutritional standards 1
20. Unable to watch child's K - 5 development 1
21. Options should be offered for self-contained classes
22. Difficult for children to maintain friendships after school 1
23. Faculties should have been split and shifted
24. There is more flexibility in scheduling 1
25. Prefer K - 5 School 3

26. Reorganization upset Sandmeier parents and children while satisfying small percent of Walton parents.

27. Caldwell School should have been included

28. Greater possibility of grouping

29. Helped people realize they can adjust to change

30. Plan should have been "packaged and sold" rather than "decided and told."

31. Full time Learning Disability teacher needed in each school.

32. Larger number of classes per grade level made arranging field trips and other activities more difficult.

33. More emphasis should be placed on developing basic skills -- even though they are emphasized now.